

# **Israel's Quest for Land**

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As against all the nations stated above, the Israelites were the only people who were foreigners in the region, homeless and destitute. In the circumstances, as stated above, the first and the foremost desire of Israel was to get hold of some land of their own to settle there. For this purpose, it was expedient to take a two-pronged action. First that the original settlers may be dispossessed militarily and second that the primacy in their right on the land may be established by declaring the Israelites as the only legitimate descendants of Abraham to whom the Lord had promised the everlasting possession of the entire land of Canaan. The basic purpose about various narrations concerning Abraham in the Genesis reflects the same urge of the Israelites. This is also evident from an observation of

Thomas Gale, given hereunder: “The common concern of a number of the stories is the quest for land and progeny, which reflects the urge of the land-hungry nomads to gain a foothold in the land where they had temporary pasturage.” *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition, Thomson Gale, 2005. vol. 1, p. 13, under ‘*Abraham*’)

The Israelites, as such, were land-hungry, and desperately trying to drive out others by force; and also by posing themselves as the true descendants of Abraham, whom according to them, God had promised the everlasting possession of the entire land of Canaan. Abraham, therefore, became the focus of Israeli identity and destiny, during the time of their entry in Canaan, and ‘with the crises of exile, the figure of Abraham became a paradigm of hope for restoration of

nationhood and Israel's return to the land of its forefathers.' (*Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition, Thomson Gale, 2005. vol. 1, p. 15). It was the aforesaid sad state of Israel which earned them **the befitting title of 'Hebrews'** meaning '**the homeless foreigners**', '**foreign servants**', and '**nomads**' etc. Gradually the said term became equated with the Israelites in and around Canaan.

The Israelites were fully aware that most of the nations around Canaan, especially those possessing vast territories in the Arabian Peninsula, were either the direct descendants of Abraham or they considered him their forefather in faith. They, therefore, started stressing their peculiarity as the only genuine descendants of Abraham, and by various means tried to exclude all other descendants of

Abraham through Ishmael, and through his six sons from his wife Keturah (Gen. 25:2). Similarly, to prove Israel as the exclusive progeny of Abraham, they invented unfounded stories about Esau, son of Isaac, to deprive him even from his birthright and any other inheritance from Isaac. In addition to above, they also fabricated filthy stories to propound illegitimacy of the progeny of Lot. Utmost efforts have been made to prove Ishmaelites from an inferior caste, so that nobility and inheritance may be reserved for Israel, who pose themselves to be the only genuine progeny of Abraham and also the only people of God.

The Israelites always contend that they are the only people of God; the proud possessors of the covenant and also of the land promised to the

progeny of Abraham. The writings in the Genesis about the Israelites and their rival nations, stated above, therefore, reflect a biased version of facts to serve only the afore-stated self-interest of Israel. Keeping in view the background as above, such writings can no longer be considered the word of God, nor the word of Moses; as none of them was likely to show any partiality in favor of Israel. The Lord God of the universe was the creator and master of all the people in the world and also of all that exists throughout the universe. How can He be expected to take the side of one ethnic group and disown all His people throughout the world, especially when they have neither rebelled against Him nor the Lord has lost His hope in them? Instead of the lineage or blood group, the Lord owns or disowns the

people on the basis of their obedience or disobedience to His commandments. Whosoever obeys the Lord is included in the people of the Lord, irrespective of the fact whether he is black or white, or he is an Israeli or the gentile. The sinners and the offenders of the law of the Lord are punishable in accordance with their deeds and without any reference to the ancestral line of such culprits. We, therefore, feel that the writings, showing special privilege for Israel, as compared to others, are the self coined word of Israel. From this they intend to improve the confidence of Israel, and the same is also directed towards the social and moral uplift of the depressed people. Each part of such writings, therefore, needs a critical examination keeping in view

the history, the background, and the self interest of Israel.

We also understand that the Israelites started propagation of their primary rights in the region for a moral support to their possessions in Canaan. To relieve the Israelites from the ‘anguish of spirit’ it was necessary to transfer the stigma of slavery from Israel to others. Finding no other way they made Hagar the target of alleged slavery, and through her tried to degrade the Ishmaelites. This was only a futile effort to conceal the piety, the devotion, and nobility of Hagar; either by showing her a slave girl or a woman cast out of the family. Such mischievous attempts were of no real impact on the Ishmaelites, who were the major branch among the descendants of Abraham and sovereigns over lands, which were

200 times greater than the total possessions of Israel. This also had no bearing on the most celebrated personality of Hagar throughout the world. Even the morally depressed Israelites could not receive any consolation from the false pretensions in respect of their own superiority, as compared to the Ishmaelites.

Falsehood never turns into reality, and nothing could affect the great nation foretold by the Lord. Except for the aforesaid motive of Israel, there is no independent evidence to support the unfounded allegation of slavery against Hagar.

While studying the narrative about Hagar and Ishmael in the Genesis, we must keep in mind the afore-stated background of Israeli writings. Before believing into the one-sided version in the Genesis, we must, therefore,

evaluate the same with due care and caution; compare the same with all relevant information inside and outside the Bible objectively, and to accept or reject the same on its own merit.

Another impasse that obstructs the seeker of truth is the fact that the original contents and the words of revelation cannot be traced back to the prophets, who are supposed to be the primeval source of the revelation. It is our considered opinion that while the Israelites, in the post-exilic period, tinged the Old Testament with the self interest of Israel, our Christian brethren did not lag behind. They in turn Christianized all the revelations of the Old Testament, either by inserting new words in the text or by interpreting all the revelations and the prophecy to promote the Christian faith, as propounded by St. Paul and his

followers. Even today the Christian scholars are striving hard to revise different versions of the extant Bible in English so that the same may accord with the ever-improving doctrines of Christianity. New versions of the Bible, therefore, take care to obliterate from the text any words prophesying the advent of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Arabia by changing the words or camouflaging the same to conceal the original contents thereof. The seeker of truth, therefore, fails to neutralize the bias inserted into the text, and finds it impossible to know the original contents of the holy writ. Since the original covenant of the Lord made through Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets could not be retrieved; and no research or debate could restore the original revelation, therefore Almighty Allah revealed the

Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم), which revives all the true teachings of the prophets and negates the unauthentic insertions in the Holy Book. In spite of the fact that Israeli and Christian scholars were fully aware of the truth, but due to their own vested interests, they concealed the same from their laymen. The Lord has exposed their trend of concealment at various places in the Qur'an, but it will suffice to quote a single instance here.

Surely those who conceal the clear proofs and the guidance that We revealed after We made it clear in the Book for men, these it is whom Allah shall curse, and those who curse shall curse them (too). (Al-Qur'an 2:159)

In spite of all transgression of man, however, Almighty Allah did not desert

the human beings nor did he deprive them of His guidance. The Lord, therefore, reproduced all the contents of His covenant through the prophets of the old in the final, immutable, and everlasting covenant, i.e. the Qur'an, which is available in all the parts of the world with its original words and the contents. No one in the world, therefore, has any excuse that he had no access to the uncontaminated guidance from the Lord.

## **The Prejudice of Israel**

The Israelites and their successors especially St. Paul and his followers endeavor in vain to establish the superiority of the Israelites over the Ishmaelites on the ground that Ishmaelite were born in slavery, while the Israelites were born of a free

woman. Hence, they claim that the Israelites are free people, not born in slavery. They forget that even almighty Allah reminded them of their prolonged slavery again and again thorough out the Old Testament. There can be no greater proof of the age-long slavery of Israel than the word of the Lord recorded in the Old Testament and the history confirming the same. All of them openly repudiate the word of God, in spite of the fact that they still recite the word of God recorded in the Old Testament.

History has effectively contradicted the boastful claims of any freedom of the Jews. How can one deny the facts that periodically the Israelites came under the heals of one or the other surrounding empires and except for a period of about hundred and twenty years they never enjoyed the absolute

independence in the region? They remained slaves with Egyptian for 400 years and thereafter the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Romans, Persians, and many others enslaved them. They were driven away as slaves again and again and remained under captivity for very long periods of time. Their 10 tribes vanished under slavery and exile, leaving no trace behind them. The Israelites were cursed by the Lord, and suffered from one calamity after another through out their history. Such chastisements from the Lord are continuing till today, only to tone down the arrogant assertions of Israel.

Even Saint Paul could not get rid of the deep-rooted inferiority complex of slavery lurking in the minds of the Jews and perhaps, to console his conscience, he made an unsuccessful

attempt to transfer the slur of slavery from the faces of the Jews to the Ishmaelites. We wish, our Christian and Israeli brethren may consult the Old Testament again and search the annals of history to dispel unfounded notion of their freedom which, actually, they never had, except for very short spells in the entire history of Israel.

Our study reveals that St. Paul's reference to freedom of Israelites is basically an untruth which is unbecoming of a man of the level of that acclaimed saint. Factually, in the chronicles, the Israelites rarely had a relapse from slavery and oppression during major period of their existence. They mostly remained suppressed under the rule of other powers in the region; and even when Paul was convincing them of their freedom they were actually under the oppression of

the Romans. As such, the freedom proposed by St. Paul was not the freedom or independence of Israel from their oppressors. The freedom, propounded by St. Paul was the freedom of Israel from God and his law but not from the Roman oppressors. As against this, St. Paul advised the Israelites to submit unconditionally before the Roman despots and to obey all the laws made by them. Thus, denying the law of the Lord, the ‘free born’ of St. Paul were advised to accept wholeheartedly the physical slavery under the oppressive laws of their earthly kings. Such a freedom is actually a curse, announced by Moses, the greatest among the prophets of Israel. The final curse announced by Moses to all the Israelites reads as under:

Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.  
(Deu.27:26 KJV)

Who is the person who advised abrogation as well as disobedience to God's law and earned the curse of God, need not be named by us. The readers of the Bible can themselves pin point the person/persons earning the aforesaid curse.

## **St. Paul Differentiates between Descendants of Hagar and Sarah**

Following the psyche of Israel, St. Paul too presented Hagar as a slave woman while, according to him, Sarai was a free woman giving birth to freemen as a result of God's promise. About Hagar he said:

“the one whose children are born in slavery is Hagar” (Gal. 4:24)

He further clarifies his standpoint in the following words:

“so then my brothers and sisters, we are not the children of a slave woman but of a free woman” (Gal. 4:31)

Incidentally, we observe that the afore-stated assertion of St. Paul, if believed, can pervert the entire genealogies of human beings. Instead of patriarchal genealogy, he has introduced matriarchy; which obliterates the unifying role, as well as, the importance of Abraham as the primogenitor of all the people of the book. If only mothers were the sole basis of freedom or slavery, then Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Jacob, through Bilhah (the slave of Rachel), and Gad and Asher from Zilpah (the

slave of Leah) would also be giving birth to slaves after slaves forever. Everyone is aware that no distinction was ever made between the descendants of Jacob on account of their slave mothers, and Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher continued to enjoy parity with other eight tribes of Israel. The instance given above is enough to expose the untruth in the argument of St. Paul, who tried to suggest superiority to Israelites over the Ishmaelites through flimsy allegation of slavery against Hagar, and also by creating a differentiation between the Israelites and the Ishmaelites on the basis of their mothers.

We also observe that St. Paul tried to pose as a greater God by openly repudiating the word of God and calling slaves to those whom God had

declared as 12 princes to be born to Ishmael. The Bible has it that God said to Abraham:

“And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; **twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.**” (Gen. 17:20)

Any person with a common sense can realize that only free people make a great nation, while a multitude of slaves cannot be ascribed as such. Hence, those who denounce Hagar as a slave girl who gives birth to slaves, rebel against the Lord. We, therefore, conclude that St. Paul knowingly resorted to falsehood in respect of Israel, who have always been slaves to others and remained oppressed by the nations around them. They were

crushed and driven into exile as slaves again and again. As against this, the Ishmaelites have always been holding sovereignty in major part of the Arabian Peninsula and subsequently established the greatest empires in the Middle East. Even at present, the Ishmaelites enjoy sovereignty and independence in vast parts of the world, and their faith is the fastest growing religion being practised throughout the world.